

Faith United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

No Matter who you are, or where you are in life's journey,
You are welcome here!

February 26, 2020

Sacred Fellowship 7:00 PM



*stand as you are able

Prelude

"I Call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ"

J. S. Bach

Welcome

Call To Worship

Leader: We gather in the dimness of evening

**People: to be with the God who brightens
the shadows of our lives.**

L: We gather in the quiet of this place,

**P: to be with Jesus, knowing that nothing
past, present, or future separates us.**

We gather to be marked as disciples,
to be fed for the journey through Lent,

***HYMN**

Forty Days and Forty Nights

#205

***Prayer of Confession** (read responsively)

L: Have mercy on us, O Gracious One,
According to your steadfast love;

P: According to your abundant kindness

Forgive us where our thoughts and deeds have hurt others.

Teach us, that we may know our weaknesses,
The shortcomings that bind us.

**Create in us a clean heart, O Merciful One,
And put a new and right Spirit within us.**

Enfold us in the arms of love,
And fill us with your Holy Spirit.

**Restore in us the joy of your saving grace,
And encourage us with a new spirit. Amen.**

(taken from Psalm 51, *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill)

A moment for quiet reflection

***Assurance**

Poem for Meditation: **Blessing the Dust** by Jan L. Richardson

All those days
you felt like dust,
like dirt,
as if all you had to do
was turn your face
toward the wind
and be scattered
to the four corners

or swept away
by the smallest breath
as insubstantial—

did you not know
what the Holy One
can do with dust?

This is the day
we freely say
we are scorched.

This is the hour
we are marked
by what has made it
through the burning.

This is the moment
the ancient ashes,
that makes its home
inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.

Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are
but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made
and the stars that blaze
in our bones
and the galaxies that
spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 139:1-12

L: Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?

**P: If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.**

If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

**even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.**

If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night',

**even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**

Matthew 6:1-21

Reflection

Telling the Truth

Hymn

Just as I am

#207

The Imposition of Ashes and Communion

Tonight you have the opportunity to partake in the Sacrament of Communion and in the ritual of ashes placed on your forehead or hand. You are then invited to receive ashes on your forehead or hand, as a reminder of your desire to let go of the past and move toward new directions in your life. Finally, as we celebrate communion, know that wherever we are in life, God meets us with the love made manifest through Christ.

Celebrant: Come and eat from the bread of life and drink from the cup of salvation.

All: In the meal we are about to share, we celebrate with remembrance, communion, and hope.

Celebrant: *Remembrance* that Christ offered his life, so that we may have abundant life. *Communion* signifies that God has never left us, and *hope* signifies that what is, is not all that can be. God is at work in bringing about a new creation, around us and in us.

As we approach the Lord's table for both ashes and communion, listen for signs of hope and signs that a new direction is possible for us.

On the same night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me."

After they'd eaten, he took the cup and said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

This table of the Lord is open to all, and we cordially invite all to partake. Come now to seek God's presence and prepare your heart for the Lenten journey. Come now, because all things are ready.

(Instructions: If you are able, please come forward to take a piece of bread and then dip it in the grape juice for communion. You are welcome to receive the ashes on your forehead, or your hand, or you can cross your arms over you heart to signify you don't want ashes but would prefer a blessing. We are happy to serve you in your pew, too.)

Lenten Prayer

You wait on this evening,
Patient God, for us to come back:
to stop going away from you on our self-focused travels;
to set aside our empty fears;
to cease shaping you in our image, so we can discover you closer than we ever dare imagined.

**You wait for us this night,
Companion of our hearts,
for us to follow once more:
leaving the shuttered corners of our lives;
refusing to go from one failed promise to another;
coming out of the panic rooms we have built in our souls,
so you can take us by the hand to lead us to resurrection life.**

You wait in scattered ashes of our lives,
Spirit of silence, for us to find you:
in the broken bread which strengthens us to serve;

in the cup of grace which fills our emptiness;
in our sisters and brothers who are willing to hold us up
when we falter,
so you can embrace us with joy and hope in every moment.

**As you wait, and as we seek to return to you in these moments, Open our heart
to your love. Amen.**

Hymn

Be Now My Vision

#451

Benediction

So let the ashes come as beginning and not as end;
the first sign but not the final. Let them rest upon you
as invocation and invitation,
and let them take you the way that ashes know to go.
May they mark you
with the memory of fire
and of the life that came before the burning:
the life that rises and returns
and finds its way again.
See what shimmers amid their darkness,
what endures within their dust.
See how they draw us toward the mystery
that will consume but not destroy,
that will blossom from the blazing,
that will scorch us with its joy.
We go in peace to love and serve our God and our Community,
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Postlude

Madrigal in E-flat

A. Guilmant

*Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,
through our service as God's stewards to the world and all creation.
Use the blessings God has given you as you share
the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,
the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.*

Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us.



Welcome to all first-time (and returning) guests to Faith UCC! We would like to get to know you and for you to get to know us.

Join us after worship for coffee and **conversation**.

There is free parking on Sundays at the meters and at the McAllister & Pugh Street parking garages – so, we hope you'll worship with us again next Sunday!

Electronic Giving Options: During the offering time in the service, you may place your offerings on the plates the ushers will bring around. If you prefer to give electronically simply **scan the QR code** with your smartphone to be directed to our online donation page.



March Special Offering



One Great Hour
OF SHARING

[One Great Hour of Sharing](http://onegreathourofsharing.org/)

<http://onegreathourofsharing.org/> or

<http://www.ucc.org/oghs>)

One Great Hour is a Christian effort to empower, provide water, supply food, and give relief from disasters. Learn more at: <http://onegreathourofsharing.org> Make checks payable to Faith UCC with "OGHS" noted in the memo line, or use the special envelope on Sunday, March 31st.

Calendar items are listed in the Announcements.

If you'd like a large print bulletin or earphones for hearing assistance, please speak with an usher.

Faith UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through worship and the sharing of God's word. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, capability, or circumstance of life.

Our Ministry

Ministers — All the Congregation Pastor — Rev. Jes Kast
Liturgist — Sue Cromwell

Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman
Organist—Mark Ferraguto Choir Director — Marinda Jenkins
Administrative Assistant — Jeff Stormer

Prayers for healing and wholeness:

Jane DeBarber, Micah Plggott, the family of Daniel Pfaff, Patty Bittner (Jean's daughter), Lisa V. (John Vincenti's daughter), Darlene Ripka.

Please help us keep this list up to date. Notify the office of additions or removals.

Get In Touch with Us!

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On the Web: www.faithucc.info facebook.com/SCFaithUCC

Church Office Email: faithuccsc@gmail.com

Pastor email: PastorJesFaithUCC@gmail.com

Church Office Hours: 9:30 AM– 1:30 PM Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Pastor Jes' office hours: 9-5 M-Th. Pastor also values community engagement. Please contact the office ahead of visits.